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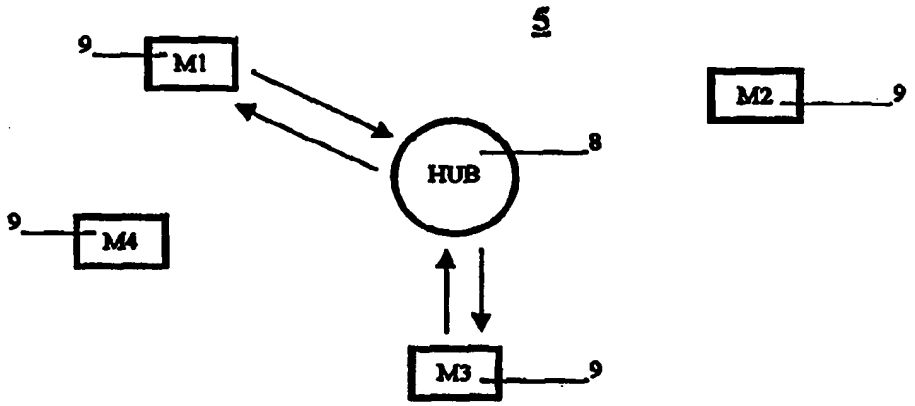

(57) Abstract

A method for controlling communications between a hub and a plurality of distributed stations over a medium is disclosed. The method comprises the steps of a method for controlling communications access between a hub (8) and a plurality of distributed stations (M1–M7) over a medium, the method comprising the steps of (a) allocating a plurality of channels for data communications between the station (M1–M7) and the hub (8), the number of channels being at least equal to the number of stations, (M1–M7) and each station owning at least one channel, each channel being varyingly in one of an empty–, a reserved–, or an owner–state, and whereby (i) the empty–state provides a channel to which any station (M1–M7) can have access; (ii) the reserved–state provides a channel to which a station (M1–M7) having made a reservation with the hub (8), but not owning the channel, can have access; and (iii) the owner–state provides a channel to which only the owning station (M1–M7) has access; and (b) re–allocating the respective state and/or the number of channels over time on the basis of each station's data requirements.